
Matthijs van den Bos. Elements of Neo-Traditional Sufism in Iran

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Matthijs van den Bos. « Elements of Neo-Traditional Sufism in Iran », in : Martin Van Bruinessen & Julia Day Howell, eds., *Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam*. London and New York, I. B. Tauris, 2007, p. 61-75.

- 1 This essay on major developments in Iranian *Shiah* Sufism in the 20th century discusses the relations between *Shiah* Sufis and the state, and assesses the impact of sociopolitical changes on the organization of the Sufi orders. Focusing on two particular branches of the Ni'matullāhiyya, namely the Ṣafī'alīšāhī and Sulṭān'alīšāhī orders, the author explores Sufi involvement in society and politics throughout the 20th century – in shaping the modern nation-state, from the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911) through the Reḍā Ḥān (r. 1921-1941) and Moḥammad Reḍā Pahlavī (r. 1941-1979) eras, and under the Islamic Republic since 1979. According to the author, *Shiah* Sufism was, during these periods, highly politicized, characterized by ideological and organizational renewal and distinguished by its focus on the nation-state. Conversely, during Khatami's presidency (1997-2005), *Shiah* Sufism was virtually absent from the public sphere and characterized by another-worldly quietism. Drawing on publications by influential members of the orders studied, the author argues that this quietism did not represent a retreat into a socially disengaged Sufism but, instead, represented a complex engagement with the modern nation-state. This essay is part of the edited volume *Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam* (See *Abs. Ir.* 31, 2008, c.r. n° 250).

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